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RECENT GEOPHYSICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENTS

EARTHQUAKES OCCUR IN MONGOLIA, ASHKHABAD -- Izvestiya, No 84, 8 Apr 50

On 4 April, the Moscow Central Seismic Station, Geophysics Institute, Academy of Sciences USSR, recorded a violent earthquake which occurred 4,080 kilometers from Moscow. The epicenter of the earthquake was 200 kilometers southwest of Irkutsk, near Lake Kosogol, in the Mongolian People's Republic.

According to the Irkutsk Seismic Station, the force of the earthquake reached 5. In Moscow, soil was displaced 150 microns. The area on the western side of Lake Baykal is a zone of considerable seismic activity whose seismic force is at most 8.

On 6 April, the Moscow Central Seismic Station and several other stations recorded an earthquake whose epicenter was 2,500 kilometers from Moscow in the Ashkhabad region. In Ashkhabad, the earthquake's force was 7. Soil displacement in Moscow was only 10 microns due to the fact that the seat of the disturbance was not deep. This earthquake may be considered an aftermath of the main Ashkhabad earthquake of 6 October 1948.

The Geophysics Institute is sending a group of scientists to the area of the last earthquake to make an on-the-spot study of its effects.

SOVIET ASTRONOMERS ACHIEVE NEW SUCCESSES -- Sovetskaya Litva, No 68, 19 Mar 50

Leningrad -- The first photographs of the so-called solar corona, taken at an astronomical station high in the Caucasus Mountains, were received by the Main Astronomical Observatory USSR. In a conversation with a TASS correspondent, the director of the observatory, Professor A. A. Mikhaylov, Corresponding Member, Academy of Sciences USSR, reported:

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"At the end of 1949, excellent photographs were made of the solar atmosphere -- the so-called prominences -- at the astronomical station. A special filter was not used in the photographic processes. In January and February 1949, a clear photograph of the spectral line of the solar corona was taken for the first time.

"Astronomer A. A. Kalinyak, who took the first photographs, produced a fine picture of the corona in infra-red light.

"The successes achieved by Soviet astronomers in studying the solar chromosphere, prominences, and coronas outside the eclipse are of great scientific importance. They make it possible to organize regular observations of the outer areas of the sun on a continuous basis."

ISSUE NEW MAP OF EUROPEAN USSR -- Bakinskiy Rabochiy, No 60, 24 Mar 50

The publishing house of the Academy of Sciences USSR has issued a map showing the vegetation of European USSR on a scale of 1:2,500,000. A vast amount of information from field expeditions, gathered over a number of years by the Botanical Institute imeni V. L. Komarov, was used for the map's compilation.

The map is published in 18 colors and is supplemented with a chart locating state shelter belts and field shelter belts on kolkhoz and sovkhoz fields. The explanatory text consists of 18 printed pages.

LACK OF UNIFORMITY IN KAZAKH PLACE NAMES -- Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, No 7, 10 Jan 50

The lack of uniformity in use of Kazakh place names lowers the quality of the maps produced and seriously hampers their utilization. Besides its cartographic significance, the correct determination of place names is also important in establishing a basis for giving the correct meaning to many Kazakh place names. The information contained in place names is likewise a valuable aid to the understanding of history, the peculiarities of the language, and ethnography. All this urgently demands regulation and uniformity in drafting Kazakh geographical names.

At present, complete confusion exists in determining these names. The same name is written differently on different maps, in handbooks, and textbooks, and at times even on the same map. If cartographic enterprises were to have some definite rules for transliterating, the authors of printed works in Kazakhstan would not be free to choose their own methods and the confusion would be decreased. For example, although the simple Kazakh word "shoky" (small volcano) consists of only 5 letters, it is written on the present map in ten different ways (shoko, shoku, shoky, shokho, choku, shoka, choka, choko, sheku, cheky). The word "shi" (name of a plant) has four variants (chiy, chi, shiy, shi). Place names composed of two or more roots are even more confusing. The common name for the Kzyl-Kum sands has 30 variations, including Kzylkum, Kzylkumy, Kizilkum, Kyzylkum, etc.

In the transliteration of Kazakh place names, they are often represented in Russian by sounds which are not at all the same as the Kazakh sounds. Thus, for example, instead of "zh," "dzh" is used (Dzhezdy for Zhezdy; Dzhezkazkan for Zhezkazgan). The sound "ch," which is not used in Kazakh root words, is used instead of the more correct sound "sh" (Uchbulak for Ushbulak). "Sh" inaccurately replaces "s" while "i" is used for "zh" (Besharyk for Besaryk; Ilan for Zhylan).

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Even more trouble is encountered in regard to the determination of compound Kazakh place names which are composed of two, and less often of three or more, words which often express one idea. These compounds account for more place names. At present, each part of names composed in this way is often written separately with a hyphen and a capital letter for the second word. Cartographers in compiling maps, or authors in their writings, frequently do not understand the meaning of a word composed of even one root and so divide the compound into separate words, writing these words with a hyphen and a capital letter. Thus, for example, the name Solyukty (a place with many leeches) is written Solyuk-Ta, Zhyngyldy -- Chin-Keldi, Togyzbay (a personal name) -- Togyz-Bay, etc. To make matters worse, cartographers and authors try to etymologize and interpret the different parts of these artificially divided words.

From the above examples, it is clear that it has long been necessary to standardize Kazakh place names as has been done in the Russian language.

The Department of Geography and the Institute of Geology of the Academy of Sciences Kazakh SSR are compiling a dictionary of Kazakh place names with a translation of their meaning into Russian. The dictionary is included in the publishing plan for the Academy of Sciences for 1950. Since this is very important for the further growth of culture among the Kazakh people, there is no doubt that the Soviet people will actively participate in standardizing Kazakh place names. -- G. Konkashpayev, Candidate of Geographical Sciences.

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